

TRANSITION SERVICES

**REHABILITATION SERVICES
FOR THE BLIND**

**VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
PROGRAM**

RSB MISSION IN TRANSITION

To provide students with the opportunities, training and support necessary to prepare them for life after their secondary school experience, whether that involves employment, post-secondary education, technical training or independent living.

TRANSITION IS.....

An all-inclusive process that focuses on improving a student's employment outcome, housing options, and social networks after leaving school.

The transition plan, documented in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) provides the framework for identifying, planning and carrying out activities that will help each student make a transition to adult life.

LEGISLATIVE FOUNDATION

IDEA (as amended in 2004)

A coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that:

Is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is **focused on improving the academic and functional achievement** of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment); continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and

Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

LEGISLATIVE FOUNDATION

Rehabilitation Act (as amended by WIOA)

A coordinated set of activities for an individual with a disability, designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

VR TRANSITION SERVICES

The coordinated set of activities must be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and must include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Transition services must promote or facilitate the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the student's individualized plan for employment.

INTERAGENCY TRANSITION AGREEMENT

IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act requires MVR, RSB and DESE share the responsibility to plan and coordinate transition services to VR eligible students who receive special education services.

The Rehabilitation Act requires VR agencies and SEA's to enter into formal interagency agreements describing how they will collaboratively plan and coordinate transition services.

REQUIRED COMPONENTS

The formal interagency agreement contains the following components:

Consultation and technical assistance in transition planning

Transition planning related to the Individualized Education Program

Roles and Responsibilities of each agency

Procedures for outreach

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY

The LEA is primarily responsible for providing and paying for those services related to transition services for educational purposes. This includes classroom instruction, accommodations, assessments, O&M, Braille, ADL skills, etc.

RSB is primarily responsible for the cost of transition planning services for employment purposes, beyond the scope of the special education program and IDEA requirements, and are necessary for the eligible student to reach an identified employment outcome. RSB cannot provide or duplicate LEA services.

YOUTH VS. STUDENT

WIOA defines two categories of transition services:

1. “Youth with a disability” is defined as anyone who has a disability and is aged 14 to 24, regardless of whether they are in school.
2. “Student with a disability” is defined as an individual with a disability in school who is:
 - a. 16 years old, or younger, if determined appropriate under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), unless the State elects to provide pre-employment transition services at a younger age, and no older than 21, unless the State provides transition services under IDEA at an older age; and
 - b. Receiving transition services pursuant to IDEA, or is a student who is an individual with a disability for the purposes of section 504 of the Act (29 U.S.C. 794).

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY

All students with disabilities would meet the definition of a youth with a disability, but not all youth with disabilities would satisfy the definition of a student with a disability.

Current proposed regulations for the definition of a “student with a disability” specifically excludes students in post-secondary education.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES

PETS services are for students with disabilities:

Enrolled in secondary education and not yet graduated high school

21 years of age or younger

With an IEP or 504 plan

Available to individuals or groups, even if the student has not applied for RSB services

PETS REQUIRED ACTIVITIES

- (1) Job exploration counseling;
- (2) Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;
- (3) Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
- (4) Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living;
- (5) Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES

- (1) Implementing effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces;
- (2) Developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary education experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment;
- (3) Providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities;
- (4) Disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of this section;

AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES

- (5) Coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- (6) Applying evidence-based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel, in order to better achieve the goals of this section;
- (7) Developing model transition demonstration projects;
- (8) Establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving States, local educational agencies, designated State units, developmental disability agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goals of this section; and
- (9) Disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally unserved populations.

PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION COORDINATION

- (i) Attending individualized education program meetings for students with disabilities, when invited;
- (ii) Working with the local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, including internships, summer employment and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, and apprenticeships;
- (iii) Working with schools, including those carrying out activities under section 614(d) of the IDEA, to coordinate and ensure the provision of pre-employment transition services under this section;
- (iv) When invited, attending person-centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.)

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Neither the local educational agency nor the VR agency may shift the burden for providing a service, for which it otherwise would be responsible, to the other entity

1. The purpose of the service--Is it related more to an employment outcome or education?
2. Customary Services--Is the service one that the school customarily provides under IDEA part B?
3. Eligibility--Is the student with a disability eligible for transition services under IDEA?

TRANSITION CONSULTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

General information regarding VR eligibility, VR services and specialized services for the blind.

Explore and identify employment goals and transition related services (work-based learning, apprenticeships, dual enrollment programs, industry recognized credential programs, community college and university two and four year degree programs).

Foster linkages with employers, other community service agencies.

Share information to enable school personnel to understand the disability.

TRANSITION PLANNING

IDEA requires the IEP for each student with a disability, must, beginning not later than the first IEP be in effect when the child turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team, include:

1. Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills (self-advocacy, home management, personal finance, public trans.)
2. The transition services (including course of study and classroom/test taking accommodations) needed to assist the student in reaching those goals.

TRANSITION PLANNING

VR transition planning includes assisting the LEA with:

Identifying the student's assistive or rehabilitation technology needs.

Determining the student's strengths, skills and interests through career exploration activities.

Counseling the student and families to think about goals for life after high school, and develop a personal plan of study or plan for employment to get there.

Designing the high school experience to ensure that youth gain the skills and competencies needed to achieve their desired post-secondary goals and career pathway.

Identifying and linking youth and their families to any needed post-secondary services, supports or programs before they exit the school system.

OUTREACH

RSB provides outreach to identify students in need of transition services and inform education staff, students and families:

Purpose of the VR program

Eligibility requirements

Application procedure

Scope and services that may be provided

Other resources such as 504 and ADA accommodations, disability support services through higher education, resources for SSA benefits counseling

REFERRAL

Referrals may be initiated by the school, self-referral, by a family member, medical professionals, or other community resources.

There is no specific time frame or age. VR Referral usually occurs two or more years before the student graduates, typically when the focus turns to post-secondary education or training and planning for employment.

SCHOOL REFERRAL

RSMO 162.1139 requires school districts, with parental consent, to refer students with visual impairment to RSB.

The Office of Special Education within DESE has developed a website describing the referral process and form, found at <http://dese.mo.gov/content/blind-rehabilitation-services-student-referral-process>

YOUTH SERVICES PRIOR TO APPLICATION

In some cases, RSB may provide services without opening a VR case or prior to VR application. Services are limited to:

Consultation to students and families

Technical assistance to schools

Participation in IEP meetings

ILR/CS services

APPLICATION PROCESS

A student referred to RSB who meets the following requirements should complete a VR application for services:

1. The student has an identified vocational goal and requires vocational rehabilitation services; or
2. The student requires VR services to assist them in identifying a vocational goal; or
3. The student is within two years of graduation/mandatory exit from school.

RSB ELIGIBILITY

A referral to RSB does not automatically result in eligibility for VR services, unless the individual is receiving social security benefits based on blindness.

Youth with disabilities must be determined eligible for services.

To be eligible for RSB VR services, a person must have a physical or mental impairment, one of which must be a visual impairment that meets the visual disability requirements of RSB, which creates a substantial impediment to employment and requires VR services to prepare for, enter into, engage in or retain gainful employment.

ASSESSMENT

Once eligibility has been determined, the VRC will begin exploration of employment and career goals. The exact type of evaluation or assessment is based on individual interests, needs, and informed choice, but may include:

Comprehensive Personal and Vocational Assessment

Vocational evaluation

Transition or Supported Employment Assessment

INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT

The individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is developed jointly with the student to identify services necessary to achieve the vocational goal.

The IPE development should be coordinated with the IEP goals/objectives and personal plan of study.

The IPE is developed as early as possible during the transition planning process, but at the latest, by the time the student leaves the school setting.

VR services are those services necessary for an individual to prepare for, secure, regain or retain employment and can only be provided if specified in the IPE. Services must be necessary for the achievement of the vocational goal.

DETERMINATION OF SERVICES

As appropriate to the vocational rehabilitation needs of each individual and consistent with each individuals informed choice, RSB provides services in the most cost effective manner in order to assist the eligible individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice.

“NO-COST” SERVICES

Career guidance and counseling

Assistance with job-placement and job development

Assessment of barriers to employment

Technical assistance to schools/students

Training in the student's home on alternative techniques for the performance of activities of daily living, including alternative techniques for personal care, travel, and communication

SERVICES PURCHASED BY RSB

Examples of RSB services provided to eligible individuals, as identified on the IPE, may include:

Vocational evaluation/specialized transition assessments

Transition training at Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRP's)

Paid, unpaid, subsidized or unsubsidized on-the-job training, work experience, job shadowing, job try-outs, or job mentoring

Supported employment assessment and training

Assistive technology assessment and devices/services Personal/vocational/adjustment training

College preparation training at CRP facilities in accordance with federal regulations

SERVICES AFTER GRADUATION/EXIT FROM SCHOOL

Once the student leaves school, RSB becomes the primary coordinator/provider of services in accordance with the IPE. Examples include:

Cost of formal training at a VoTech school, community college, or university 2 or 4 year degree program.

Transportation for evaluation/training

O&M, Braille, and IL skills training

Assistive aids and devices

Adaptive technology and training

CONTACT US

Anyone interested in the services offered by Rehabilitation Services for the Blind can get further information or referral information by calling (toll free) **1-800-592-6004**. FSD county office staff may refer persons to the RSB central office or to one of the district office locations. Information can also be requested by Email addressed to: askrsb@dss.mo.gov